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NYTimes.com > Opinion

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Don't Cut Off Money for Amtrak

Published: March 2, 2005

To the Editor:

Re "Starving Amtrak to Save It," by Norman Y. Mineta, the transportation secretary (Op-Ed, Feb. 23):

Cutting off Amtrak's money will merely shift to the states a burden that they cannot handle. This has the potential of jeopardizing or even ending the operation of some lines.

In the Northeast in particular, it would also affect the many other transit systems that run on or use the Northeast Corridor infrastructure.

For my state of New Jersey, that would adversely affect the 82,000 daily commuters who ride New Jersey Transit trains that operate along Amtrak's Northeast Corridor every day.

All of these riders could be deprived of a safe alternative to driving on our state's congested roads.

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On 9/11, our commercial aviation system was shut down, stranding thousands. Meanwhile, Amtrak ridership surged as thousands of people took Amtrak to get home. Since then, Amtrak ridership has continued to climb to record levels.

I urge Secretary Mineta and the Bush administration to work with both Republicans and Democrats in Congress to ensure that Amtrak remains a viable transportation option for commuters.

Jon S. Corzine U.S. Senator from New Jersey Washington, Feb. 24, 2005

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